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NOTES AND COMMENT

At the joint meeting of the American Geographical Society and Association of American Geographers held in New York April 16 and 17, much interesting ecological material was presented. Henry E. Crampton, of Columbia University and the Museum of Natural History, in his paper "The Zoological Facts of Distribution in Relation to the Problem of Subsidence in Polynesia" showed that the snail of the genus *Partula* is confined to those parts of the islands where a comparatively high degree of moisture prevails. Isolation of the islands by subsidence gives an unusually favorable opportunity to study the divergent evolution of the various species in correlation with their insular separation and their further diversification in the suitable ecological situations of the various valleys belonging to one and the same island. Much interesting material on this subject may be found in Crampton's "Studies on Variation, Distribution and Evolution of the Genus Partula; The Species Inhabiting Tahiti," Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 228, 1917.

Robert Cushman Murphy of the Brooklyn Museum, in his paper on an "Expedition to the Peruvian Littoral," presented, among other material, a very interesting set of maps showing the control which the cold water of the Humbolt current and of a similar cold current off the coast of southern California exerts upon the distribution of seals, certain fish, and birds which depend upon marine organisms for food.

M. L. Fernald of Harvard, in his paper "The Contrasts in the Geographic Affinities of Certain Mountains on the Gaspé Peninsula" gave striking evidence of the influence of the geological formation upon the distribution of plants. A certain mountain of serpentine containing 40 percent magnesium is so barren that the pictures exhibited might have been taken in the most desert portion of southwestern United States. Yet the precipitation is heavy, and on the amphibolite formation which adjoins the serpentine there is a heavy Canadian forest. "The contact of the two formations could be mapped on snowshoes," said Dr. Fernald. The plants occurring on the serpentine belong to genera which occur most abundantly in the southern hemisphere, while the plants on the limestone formation have arctic affinities. The reason for this has not yet been found.

The Association of American Geographers has adopted the policy of joint meetings with other societies, and has expressed its willingness to hold a joint meeting with the Ecological Society in Chicago next winter. Such a meeting will be of much interest. The tentative arrangements provide for an invitation program of four papers, two by each society.

Ecologists will be interested in the organization of the American Meteorological Society at St. Louis during the meetings at the beginning of the year. The purpose of the Society is to gather into one organization all who are interested not only in meteorology as a physical science, but in climatology and its effects on organic life. While the field of the Meteorological Society does not at all encroach upon that of the Ecological Society, the two supplement each other admirably. Ecologists, no matter in what phase of environment they may be interested, are almost sure to find in the Meteorological Society something of value. At present the dues of the Society are One Dollar ($1.00). It issues a small Bulletin telling of its activities. The Weather Bureau has most courteously placed the Monthly Weather Review at its disposal for the publication of articles, which the Bulletin is not now able to handle. The cosmopolitan character of the Meteorological Society may be judged from its officers: The President is Professor R. DeC. Ward of Harvard, whose main interest is in climate and its effects on man; the Vice-president is Dr. W. J. Humphreys, Professor of Meteorological Physics, Weather Bureau; the Secretary is Dr. Charles F. Brooks of the Weather Bureau, at Washington, Meteorologist and Editor of the Monthly Weather Review; and the Treasurer is Mr. Robert E. Horton, Consulting hydraulic engineer, Voorheesville, N. Y., well-known for his investigations in hydrological meteorology. Among the counsellors are included not only men who are professional meteorologists, but others who are ecologists and interested in the relation of climate to plant life, human diseases and the like, and still others who are particularly interested in the application of weather and climatic studies to business, agriculture and similar activities.

The preservation of adequate natural areas for ecological study is a matter in which the Society is actively concerned and has done much good work through its committee formed for this purpose. Ultimate success in this movement will be of incalculable value to science and will reflect corresponding credit upon the Ecological Society. One of the ways in which the Society can further this matter is by supporting and assisting in every possible way those organizations which have similar aims. The Okefinokee Society, J. F. Wilson, Secretary, Wyacross, Georgia, and the Save the Redwoods League, R. G. Sproul, Secretary-Treasurer, University of California, Berkeley, California, are two such organizations. The former, in the preamble to its constitution states that "its (the Okefinokee Swamp's) great wealth of scenic and scientific virgin attractiveness should be conserved and preserved for public educational, scientific, and recreative uses." The purposes of the Society are:

"First, to secure a part or all of the Okefinokee Swamp as a permanent Government Reservation.

"Second, to cooperate with the government, scientific societies and other agencies in using this reservation as a National History Museum and for a semi-tropical recreation and educational center.

"Third, to give authentic publicity regarding the swamp such as may promise to be of general public and scientific interest."

"The Save the Redwoods League was organized to assist in bringing about a better and more general understanding of the value of the primeval redwood forests of America as natural objects of extraordinary interest as well as of economic importance, and for the purpose of bringing into unity of action all interests concerned with the movement to preserve such portions of these forests as should be saved to represent their fullest beauty and grandeur."

The plans of the League involve:

"1. The securing of a belt of the finest redwood timber bordering the northern highway, in the hope that this area may become a state park.

"2. The obtaining of a considerable body of the most typical primitive redwood forest known, for the purposes of a National Redwood Park."

The League has already secured a number of tracts of forest.

In view of the wide scope of ecology and its importance in the natural sciences and their application, it is desirable that its content be organized and its divisions indicated as definitely as possible.

As a result of the expression of this opinion by a number of members of the society after the St. Louis meeting, President Moore appointed as a committee Professor W. G. Waterman of Northwestern University, Chairman, Dr. J. V. Hofman, U. S. Forest Service, Professor V. E. Shelford of the University of Illinois, and Professor W. C. Allee of Lake Forest University. The purpose in forming this committee was not to establish a system which shall be mandatory, but rather to suggest a classification which is more complete than anything that has heretofore been attempted and which will serve as a step towards a clearer understanding of the subject.

The committee has been working with this purpose in view and has nearly completed a tentative classification which will shortly be submitted for criticism and comment to those of the Society and others who have seemed most interested in the subject; anyone else who wishes to submit suggestions may secure a copy of the classification from Prof. Waterman. When the replies have been received the outline will again be revised and will then be published, probably in Science.

The Cornell Rural School Leaflet, edited by Prof. E. Laurence Palmer, is attempting to approach elementary Nature Study from the ecological view point. The January number contains much of interest to any ecologist. Especially valuable is the life history chart of the mammals of New York. Another issue treating of the ecology of fishes, will appear shortly, and numbers on insects and birds are in preparation.